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17 October 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Science and Technology

SUBJECT : Costs Relative to a New Satellite Program

1. Based upon a recent Itek proposal for the M-2 camera system, we have deduced a series of figures which will provide us with a base line in arriving at estimated development costs for a new satellite camera system. We have also employed the cost figures outlined by the BJ/M-2 committee regarding vehicle and launch costs in establishing the dollars associated with an operational program. Since we have built our ballpark from information gleaned from the M-2 proposal, we are cautious to suggest that the figures cited herein will only buy an M-2 or comparable system. Should a more exotic system be desired, specific contractor estimates should be solicited.

25X1 2. As is evident from Attachment 1, the cost involved in the development of a camera and recovery system will require an outlay of [redacted] Attachment 2 reflects the cost involved in a single launch of an operational system.

25X1 25X1 3. There are several qualifications which should be taken into account in considering the overall costs of a satellite program. In the first instance, with the return of Atlas missiles from our overseas launch sites, we may be able to considerably reduce the cost as shown here by earmarking the returning Atlases to our program with minimal refurbishing costs. Secondly, although we have submitted figures for the Thorad (TAT) booster, we feel that with the employment of the MK-8 dual recovery buckets, the possibility of a successful orbit is reduced and we are prone to lean towards the Atlas booster as a safety factor. Additionally, we have not considered film procurement and processing costs and have assumed we would continue to employ the same contractor facilities now used in the CORONA/MURAL/J Program. The [redacted] per Atlas launch is possibly high by [redacted] however, in view of the several newly developed items to be employed in the program the potential overage might provide some funding flexibility.

NRO review(s) completed.

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4. We estimate the development of the camera system and recovery system such as the M-2 can be accomplished within 12 months followed by three months of system qualification and tests. Operational systems could be delivered one per month thereafter. If development is commenced by November 1963, permitting first launch in February 1965,

[redacted] will be required this Fiscal Year with an additional [redacted] necessary in FY 1965 and [redacted] in FY 1966 to complete the launch of a ten-system program.



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(JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.
Acting Assistant Director
(Special Activities)

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